

REMARKS

I.. Introductory Remarks and Status of the Application

Claims 5-20 are all the claims pending in the application, and all have received substantive examination. Claims 16-20 are allowed, and claims 5-15 remain rejected. In particular, claims 5-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over 6,795,137 to Whitted et al. (Whitted) in view of US 2007/0085816 to Evanicky et al. (Evanicky).

II. Applicant's Response

By the present amendment, Applicants are canceling claims 5-15 and adding new dependent claims 21-24. Since the rejected claims have been cancelled, and new claims 21-24 do not raise prior art issues, the present grounds of rejection are rendered moot.

The purpose of the cancellation of claims 5-15 is to obtain early allowance of the subject application. As such, the changes made to the application do not constitute an acquiescence to the grounds of objection and rejection set forth in the Office Action of December 18, 2009. Applicant reserves the right to pursue allowance of the rejected claims in a future proceeding.

III. Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance

Applicant offers the following comments in response to the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance set forth on page 5 of the Office Action dated December 18, 2009.

First, Applicant does not admit to the characterizations of the teachings of Whitted and Evanicky et al. set forth in the Statement. Second, Applicant notes that, in item 14 of the Office Action, reference should have been made Evanicky et al. exclusively, rather than also to Whitted.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

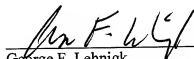
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